MARVEL®

2099

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SPIDER-MAN®

2099

Stan Lee PRESENTS:

EARTH

I'M COUNTING TO TEN.

I'M THINKING HAPPY THOUGHTS.

I'M RECITING THE LORD'S PRAYER... BACKWARDS... IN PIG LATIN.

I'M DOING EVERYTHING I CAN TO SCREEN OUT THE BABBLING OF MY DEPARTMENT HEADS, EACH CLAMORING FOR MY ATTENTION...

...EACH WITH HIS OR HER OWN PRIORITY, AT THE CENTER OF HIS OR HER OWN LITTLE UNIVERSE.

AND I'M JUST TRYING TO KEEP MY SANITY.

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PERSPECTIVE.

THAT'S WHAT THIS SITUATION NEEDS.

PERSPECTIVE.

UH... MR. O'HARA?

WHY ARE YOU STANDING ON TOP OF YOUR DESK?

DUCK.

DUCK.

DUCK.

GOOSE!

HUH?

HEY!

OW!

NOW YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO CHASE ME AROUND AND TRY AND TAG ME.

MR. O'HARA, WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!

I'M TIRED OF PLAYING YOUR GAME. SO I PICKED A NEW ONE.

BUT... BUT WE WEREN'T PLAYING A GAME...

SURE YOU WERE. IT WAS CALLED, "WHO CAN JERK AROUND THE NEW BOSS AND GET THE MOST FOR HIMSELF?"

AS I SAID, I'M NOT GOING TO PLAY IT.

I'LL REVIEW YOUR REQUESTS, ADDRESS YOUR CONCERNS, BUT IN MY OWN TIME AND OWN WAY.

NOW SHOO.

HELLO, PERSONNEL? WHERE'S THAT SECRETARY I REQUESTED?

WITH WINSTON GONE, I NEED SOMEONE TO GUARD MY DOOR. STEM THE TIDE. PUT THEIR BODY BETWEEN ME AND THE THUNDERING HORDES.

SHE SHOULD BE THERE ANY SECOND, MR. O'H--

:AHEM!: MR. O'HARA? I'M YOUR NEW SECRETARY?

YOU CAN CALL ME *APRIL*.

OH MY, YOU SHOULD BUTTON THAT UP. IT'S COLD AS THE *DICKENS* IN HERE.

THIS HAS GOT TO BE SOMEONE'S SICK IDEA OF A JOKE.

UHM... APRIL... WHY DON'T YOU MAKE YOURSELF *COMFORTABLE?*

I'LL BE, UH... RIGHT *WITH* YOU.

YES, MR. O'HARA?

GET ME SOMEONE *ELSE*. *ANYONE* ELSE.

PRONTO.

GREAT. WHAT THE SHOCK AM I GONNA *DO*? NOBODY *WANTS* THE JOB.

IT'S LIKE VOLUNTEERING TO BE THE FIRST TROOPER IN LINE TO GO DOWN IN *BATTLE*.

SIR? SOMEONE JUST CAME IN LOOKING FOR A JOB...

...AND I THINK SHE MAY BE *PERFECT* FOR MR. O'HARA.

KASE, C'MERE... YOU GOTTA SEE THIS!

ALL MY YEARS IN DOWNTOWN, I AIN'T NEVER SEE ANYTHING LIKE IT.

RAFF, I'M REALLY NOT IN THE MOOD...

WELL, GET IN THE MOOD AND GET OVER HERE.

IT'S SOME KINDA MARCH.

IT'S THE GRUNT UNION: THE SEWER WORKERS, CONSTRUCTION GUYS, WATCHDOGS, TRUCKERS...

WONDER WHERE THEY'RE HEADING?

HEY... THAT GUY AT THE FRONT... WITH THE ARMS...

SHOCK IT, I KNOW HIM! THAT'S BORU! I HEARD HE WAS DEAD!

GUESS NO ONE TOLD HIM.

I KEEP GOING OVER THE SPEECH IN MY MIND. WHAT I'LL SAY TO XINA WHEN I OFFER TO PUT HER IN CHARGE OF ALCHEMAX'S BRAND NEW E.T. RESEARCH DIVISION.

"I NEED SOMEONE LIKE YOU... NO. I NEED YOU, XINA. TO TALK TO, TO DEPEND ON. TO TRUST."

TO TRUST.

ONCE I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT WAS GABRI... BUT HE HASN'T SPOKEN TO ME SINCE DANA DIED.

I KNOW HE THINKS I SHOULD HAVE SAVED HER. AND WHY SHOULDN'T HE THINK THAT? I DO.

BERT, WHY ARE WE STOPPING?

PEOPLE EVERYWHERE, SIR. TRAFFIC'S BLOCKED.

WONDERFUL. AS IF I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH GRIEF.

STARK-FUJIKAWA, FLOODING THE WAVES WITH THEIR OWN WORST CASE SCENARIOS. PANICKING PEOPLE. I'LL HAVE TO PLACE A CALL OR TWO.

BERT... WHY NOT HEAD BACK? I'LL WALK THE REST OF THE WAY.

VERY GOOD, SIR.

VERY GOOD? NO...

NO, LATELY, THE ONLY TIME ANYTHING IS VERY GOOD IS WHEN IT'S VIEWED THROUGH THE FABRIC OF HIS MASK.

THERE'S NO REAL REASON FOR ME TO WEAR THIS COSTUME ANYMORE... EXCEPT... SOMEHOW I FEEL THAT I'VE INVESTED IT...

...WITH THE BETTER PART OF MYSELF. AND IF I LOSE IT...

...I LOSE EVERYTHING.

JACK, I'M HERE TO SEE XINA. LET ME IN, PLEASE.

SHE WILL NOT SEE YOU.

YOU'LL PARDON ME IF I WANT TO HEAR THAT FROM HER.

XINA! I'M HERE TO OFFER YOU YOUR DREAM JOB HEADING UP AN ALIEN LIFE INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT!

XINA?

I SAID SHE WILL NOT SEE YOU. THAT'S BECAUSE SHE ISN'T HERE.

SO WHERE IS SHE THEN?

I DO NOT KNOW. SHE DISCONNECTED HER PHONE HOOK-UP IN THE CAR. AND IF I AM TO BELIEVE WHAT SHE SAID...

SHE MAY NEVER COME BACK.

NOW WHY, AGAIN, DID I WANT THIS JOB?

MR. O'HARA!

MR. O'HAR--

ALL OF YOU, OUT OF HERE. NOW.

Y'KNOW, I'M GETTING GOOD AND SICK OF THIS!

MR. O'HARA, WE HAVE TO TALK NOW!

WE DON'T HAVE TO PUT UP WITH IT, O'HARA! WE--!

I BELIEVE MISTER O'HARA WANTED YOU TO LEAVE.

WHO ARE YOU?

HIS NEW SECRETARY. PLEASE LEAVE. WE'LL MAKE APPOINTMENTS TOMORROW. THAT'S ALL.

OOOOHHH NO YOU DON'T. FOR STARTERS, O'HARA PROMISED ME A REPORT--

THIS WILL MAKE A VERY LOUD REPORT.

HOW'D YOU LIKE TO HEAR IT?

WHAT A DAY. XINA GONE... THE WOLVES BAYING AT THE DOOR... THE...

WAIT.

WHY'D IT GET SO QUIET OUT THERE?

SO...

WHAT'S YOUR FIRST ORDER, BOSS?

BORU!

BORU!

BORU!

YOU CAN'T BE MY SECRETARY, MA! IT'S CRAZY--!

WHY AM I TELLING YOU THAT? I KNOW YOU'RE CRAZY!

YOU NEED ME, MIGUEL. I'M THE PERFECT BARRIER BETWEEN YOU AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

BESIDES... WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER.

HOW DO YOU FIGURE THAT?

BECAUSE I SHOT TYLER STONE.

YOU WOULDN'T BE IN CHARGE IF IT WASN'T FOR ME.

You've... you've gotta be KIDDING...

HIS SEDUCTION OF DANA WAS THE LAST STRAW. HE'S EVIL INCARNATE, MIGUEL. AN INNOCENT LIKE DANA COULDN'T POSSIBLY HAVE WITHSTOOD HIM.

I HAD TO TAKE HIM DOWN. I JUST REGRET IT WASN'T IN TIME TO SAVE HER FROM HIS CLUTCHES.

AHHH-HA-HA HAAA...! I GET IT! YOU'RE YANKING ME!

MA, THE STUFF YOU COME UP WITH...

I'M GLAD MY CLAIMING I SHOT TYLER MADE YOU LAUGH...

...JUST LIKE IT MADE ME LAUGH WHEN YOU CLAIMED YOU WERE SPIDER-MAN.

EXCUSE ME, WON'T YOU?

THERE'S SOMETHING PEACEFUL ABOUT THE ROOF.

OH, GREAT. MORE GRIEF FOR ME DEVELOPING DOWN THERE?

AND IT'S EVEN MORE PEACEFUL WHEN I THINK ABOUT JUMPING OFF IT.

I AM IN SUCH TROUBLE.

MAYBE SPIDER-MAN CAN PREVENT SOME PROBLEMS FOR ME, INSTEAD OF JUST CAUSING THEM.

IT'S A MOB SCENE. HUNDREDS, THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE.

AT LEAST THERE'S NO RIOTING. YET.

WHO'S IN CHARGE?

I AM BORU. WE SEEK MIGUEL O'HARA.

HAD A FEELING THAT WAS THE CASE.

WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT, BORU?

WE ARE THE MEN OF THE EARTH. THE GRUNTS, THE GROUND POUNDERS, THE "COMMON LABORERS" WHOSE DEMANDS HAVE BEEN IGNORED.

WE HAVE LIVED UNDER THE OPPRESSION OF TYLER STONE, ALCHEMAX, AND A GOVERNMENT UNDER THE THUMB OF BOTH.

THE WHEEL HAS TURNED. WE DEMAND OUR DUE.

WITH A SHOW OF FORCE? HOW ABOUT SENDING A SINGLE REP?

WE DID. O'HARA IGNORED HIM, ALONG WITH OTHERS CLAMORING FOR O'HARA'S ATTENTION.

A PITY. I'D'VE EXPECTED *BETTER* OF A FELLOW IRISHMAN.

DO YOU PURPORT TO SPEAK *FOR* HIM?

FOR HIM? NO. BUT *TO* HIM, YES.

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN CLAIMING I'M SOME SORT OF CORPORATE *STOOGE*. BUT I'VE BEEN WORKING FOR THE *BETTERMENT* OF THIS CITY.

TRUE. BUT SOMETIMES...

IT MAKES THE *POINT*.

SOMETIMES SHOWS OF FORCE ONLY MAKE MATTERS *WORSE*.

HOLY SHOCK.

WITH THE SPEED AND DISTANCE OF HIS LUNGE, HE'S LIKE A HUMAN LION.

UH OH.

THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG HERE. REAL WRONG.

NO WAY A GUY WHO'S SIMPLY STRONG AND POWERFUL GIVES ME THIS KIND OF GRIEF.

LAB RAT? MUTATE? SOMETHING MORE?

I'M WARNING YOU!

I'LL CONSIDER MYSELF DULY WARNED.

OOOOH YEAH. SOMETHING MORE.

OKAY... I THINK I'VE GOT HIS TIMING DOWN...

NAILED HIM!

HAD ENOUGH?

THE CROWD WAS CHANTING UP A STORM, BUT THAT QUIETED THEM A BIT.

ENOUGH? ENOUGH PAIN, DEGRADATION, AND ABYSMAL TREATMENT?

AYE, SPIDER-MAN... I'VE HAD *MORE* THAN ENOUGH.

ENOUGH TO LAST A *LIFETIME!*

I WISH HE GAVE MORE *SUCCINCT* ANSWERS.

A HITCHHIKER UP AHEAD.

NO *WAY* I PICK HIM UP. IT'S STUPID... IT'S...

HUNH.

SHOCK IT. DANA TOSSED AWAY HER *LIFE* FOR ME.

I'M LIVING ON BORROWED TIME. MIGHT AS WELL MAKE THE *MOST* OF IT.

HI.

SO... AM I GOING TO *REGRET* THIS?

OH, I WOULDN'T WORRY.

YOU'RE IN SAFE HANDS WITH *ME*.

THIS IS INSANE. I'M ACCOMPLISHING NOTHING.

IT'S JUST MAKING THINGS WORSE.

IF HE WINS, THEY GO LOOKING FOR MIGUEL... WHO'LL BE LYING UNCONSCIOUS AND HELPLESS ON THE STREET.

IF I WIN, THIS MOB GOES NUTS AND MAYBE TRASHES THE CITY.

FWIZZ

THIS WAS A MISTAKE. THE ONLY REASON FOR PERPETUATING IT IS FOOLISH PRIDE.

ARRRHHH!

SO! YOU TURN AND *FLEE* A SUPERIOR FOE, EH?

FINE! *DEVIL* TAKE YOU!

MOVE *BEYOND* MY REACH?

WITH ME, FRIENDS!

THEY CAN SCRAMBLE THEIR FORCES!

THEY CAN ASSEMBLE THEIR WEAPONS!

BUT THEY *CANNOT* DETER A SPIRIT THAT WILL NO LONGER BE *DENIED!*

ONE SIDE.

OUT OF THE WAY!

YOU! WORD'S OUT YOU WANT TO SEE MIGUEL O'HARA.

I'M HIS SECRETARY. YOU CAN MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH ME.

LEAVE THE STREET AND GET OUT OF MY WAY, YOU DUMPY LITTLE GNOME.

WATCH YOUR MOUTH!

I'VE GOT TO GET DOWNSTAIRS... SETTLE THIS MYSELF BEFORE IT GETS WORSE.

THANK HEAVEN AT LEAST MA IS UPSTAIRS, AWAY FROM TROUBLE.

HAAAA HA HAAAA!

WOMAN, YOU ARE AMUSING!

I GET THAT A LOT.

SO... THURSDAY, THEN. MORNING OR AFTERNOON?

MORNING'S NO GOOD. PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES. I DEFINITELY NEED AFTERNOON.

THREE P.M. DON'T BE LATE.

THE MARCH IS OVER! OUR POINT HAS BEEN MADE!

DISPERSE TO YOUR HOMES AND WORKPLACES AND AWAIT WORD!

AH, YOU ARE O'HARA? AND THIS WOMAN IS IN YOUR EMPLOY?

IT APPEARS SO.

SHE HAS COURAGE. AND MORE HEART THAN SPIDER-MAN.

BADMOUTH SPIDER-MAN AGAIN, YOU CAN FORGET THAT APPOINTMENT.

AS YOU WISH.

ANY ORDERS AS TO CROWD CONTROL, MR. O'HARA?

UH...NO. NO, EVERYTHING SEEMS FINE NOW.

AS YOU WERE.

NOW... ABOUT VACATION DAYS.